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BULGARIA EXPANDS ELECTRIC POWER INSTALLATIONS

NOTES PROGRESS OF ELECTRIFICATION -- Paris, La Bulgarie d'Aujourd'hui, Sep 49

When the Bulgarian government was taken over by the Fatherland Front, the country was one of the most backward in regard to electric power consumption. It amounted to scarcely 42 kilowatt-hours per capita. Germany, the main purchaser of Bulgarian goods, was interested only in the country's agricultural production until World War II, when, pressed by shortages in its armament industry, it boosted the exploitation of Bulgarian copper, lead, and chromium mines. Capitalist industrialists had no interest in long-term investments, but concentrated their activity on commercial operations.

As a result, only a few of the larger cities and about 10 percent of the villages were electrified before 1944. The share of electricity in power consumption amounted to 5 percent; the remaining power was obtained from coal, wood, and imported fuels. Electricity was produced by four power plants using diesel engines and hydraulic turbines, and most of the equipment dated from 1934.

Germany's first objective was to establish connections between the areas producing electric power and those with a shortage of power resources. In 1945 electric power production time increased from 2,300 to 4,000 operating hours, whereas electric power production increased 20 percent over the preceding year. Despite the shortage of funds and the scarcity of spare parts, the power plants were overhauled and renovated, while 120 villages were connected by low-voltage lines to the nearest power plant. The work was continued during 1946, and the construction of several high-tension power lines was also started. In the same year, an agreement with Czechoslovakia secured the actual delivery of electrical installations ordered before the war. Other agreements were concluded in Moscow for the delivery of equipment for the Nadezhda power plant [later renamed I. V. Stalin] and several other plants, as well as for a number of power lines. By the end of 1946 electric power production had increased 22 percent over 1945, and the number of hours of full-capacity production had risen to 4,200 operating hours; the number of electrified villages had increased by 206.

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The plans for 1947 and 1948 included preparatory work for the Tasheboaz Dam [Tashe or Tash Pass], the Kurilo-Mezdra-Cherven Bryag and Kurilo-Plovdiv power lines, and others. During 1947, contests were conducted for the construction of the large Rhodope, Sestrimo, and Chaya power plants, and for the Sofia thermal-electric power plant. By the end of 1947, 248 more villages had been electrified, 1,135 kilometers of power lines constructed, and the production capacity of power plants increased by 13,657 kilowatts. Electric power production increased 10.6 percent over 1946.

In 1948 assembly work under the supervision of Soviet specialists, started at the Nadezhda power plant, while Czech crews concluded the expansion work at the Maritsa and Varna [now Stalin] power plants; and the construction of the Kurilo-Mezdra-Cherven Bryag and Ruse-Razgrad lines was actively continued. The work on the Kurilo-Mezdra sector was ended before the end of 1948. During the same year, 280 more villages were electrified, and electric power production increased 12.5 percent over the preceding year.

At the end of the Two-Year Plan, 50 percent of the population was using electricity, and consumption reached 80 kilowatt-hours per capita; the production capacity of power plants increased only 20 percent, which shows how intensively the existing capacities were utilized. In 1948 the share of electric power reached 10 percent of the total production. In spite of the progress achieved since 1944, this figure shows that the electrification of the country is still in the initial stage.

The Five-Year Plan provides that the share of electricity in power production must reach 30 percent and thereby reduce the use of coal, liquid fuel, and wood for motive power and heating purposes.

The Nadezhda power plant was put into operation during the first half of 1949; a large section of the Sofia-Plovdiv and Kurilo-Cherven Bryag lines, the Danube power line providing electricity from Rumania, and the Ruse-Razgrad line were completed. The Toplika power plant and a few other projects begun in 1947 and 1948 were also finished.

On the other hand, there are still 1,800 villages without any electrical installations. The Five-Year Plan provides that by the end of 1953, 65 percent of Bulgarian villages will be electrified and 85 percent of the population will have electricity. The average per-capita consumption will reach 200 kilowatt-hours.

PLEDGE TO COMPLETE ELECTRIC PLANT -- Sofia, Izgrev, 14 Nov 50

L. Tuleshkov, director of the Maritsa 3 thermal-electric power plant now under construction, announced the following pledge made by the fitters engaged on the project:

Recognizing the urgent need for electrification of the country, the fitters pledge to complete the Maritsa 3 thermal-electric power plant for operation on 15 August 1951. The control room, the coal yard, and the petroleum storehouse will be finished by 1 July 1951; the main switch system, the fuel-pulverizing room, the scaffolding, the galleries, and the lubricant storeroom will also be ready 1 July 1951, and the assembly work will be 90 percent complete on 15 July 1951. The fitters promise Stalin to keep the Soviet machinery in perfect condition.

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